

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Final Office Action dated April 11, 2007. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the amendments made above and the remarks to follow are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 4-15 are amended to correct certain informalities and to better conform to U.S. practice, such as deleting reference designations typically used in European practice that are known to not limit the scope of the claims. Further amendments include replacing "characterized in that" with "wherein". The claims are not amended in order to address issues of patentability and Applicants respectfully reserve all rights under the Doctrine of Equivalents.

Claims 6, 9-12 and 15 are withdrawn as being drawn to a non-elected group. It is noted that upon allowance of a generic claim, such as claim 1, the additional species dependent on the generic claim are also entitled to consideration and allowance.

In the Final Office Action, claim 9 is objected to because of informalities. These informalities are corrected. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claim 9 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-8 and 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,633,051 (Holloway) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,517,124 (Rhoades). The claims are patentable for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner acknowledges that (illustrative emphasis added) "Holloway et al. and Rhoades et al. do not disclose the length of a connection element is larger than the length of a supporting element" (page 5, numbered paragraph 7). However, the Final Office Action notes that "the shape of the connection element, i.e., larger than the length of the supporting element, absent any criticality, are only considered to be obvious modifications of the shape of the connection element" (page 5, last paragraph to page 6, first paragraph). The Applicants respectfully disagree. However, merely to expedite allowance of the present application, independent claims 1, 7 and 13 are amended herein to include "wherein said connection element is longer than said supporting element so that said supporting member does not contact said detection member." It is respectfully submitted that the element contains criticality and is not merely an obvious modification. As pointed out in the specification of the present application

regarding prior systems, "[b]ecause the supporting element moves relative to the supporting unit 13, a detection member 22, attached to the upper end of the supporting element 17 will move corresponding to the movement of the sensing member 18 ... because of the bending of a portion of supporting element 17, the movement of the detection member 22 is not proportional to the movement of the sensing element 18." (See, current patent application, paragraphs 32 and 33.) It is respectfully submitted that because the connection element is longer than the supporting element, "there will always be a predetermined relation between the position of the detection member 22 and the position of the sensing member 18." (See, present application, paragraph 36.) Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that "wherein said connection element is longer than said supporting element so that said supporting member does not contact said detection member" as required by claim 1, 7 and 13 does not lack criticality and is not disclosed or suggested by Holloway in view of Rhoades.

Based on the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 7 and 13 are allowable, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested. Claims 4-6, 8-12 and 14-15

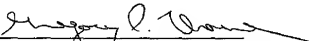
respectively depend from one of Claims 1, 7, and 13 and accordingly are allowable for at least this reason as well as for the separately patentable elements contained in each of the claims. Accordingly, separate consideration of each of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In addition, Applicants deny any statement, position or averment of the Examiner that is not specifically addressed by the foregoing argument and response. Any rejections and/or points of argument not addressed would appear to be moot in view of the presented remarks. However, the Applicants reserve the right to submit further arguments in support of the above stated position, should that become necessary. No arguments are waived and none of the Examiner's statements are conceded.

Amendment in Reply to Final Office Action mailed on April 11, 2007

Applicants have made a diligent and sincere effort to place this application in condition for immediate allowance and notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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